

THE

MAN OF STEEL UNIVERSE

SPECIAL

THE SALLY

James
Tynion IV

Maria
Llovet

1



BLACK
LABEL

17+
MATURE

A
PIVOTAL CHAPTER
OF THE

NIGHTMARE
COUNTRY
SAGA



BEING A FATHER CAN'T BE HARDER
THAN BEING BATMAN...RIGHT?!

WEB
TOON

BATMAN: WAYNE FAMILY ADVENTURES

volume
ONE

© & TM DC.

WRITTEN BY
CRC PAYNE

ART BY
STARBITE

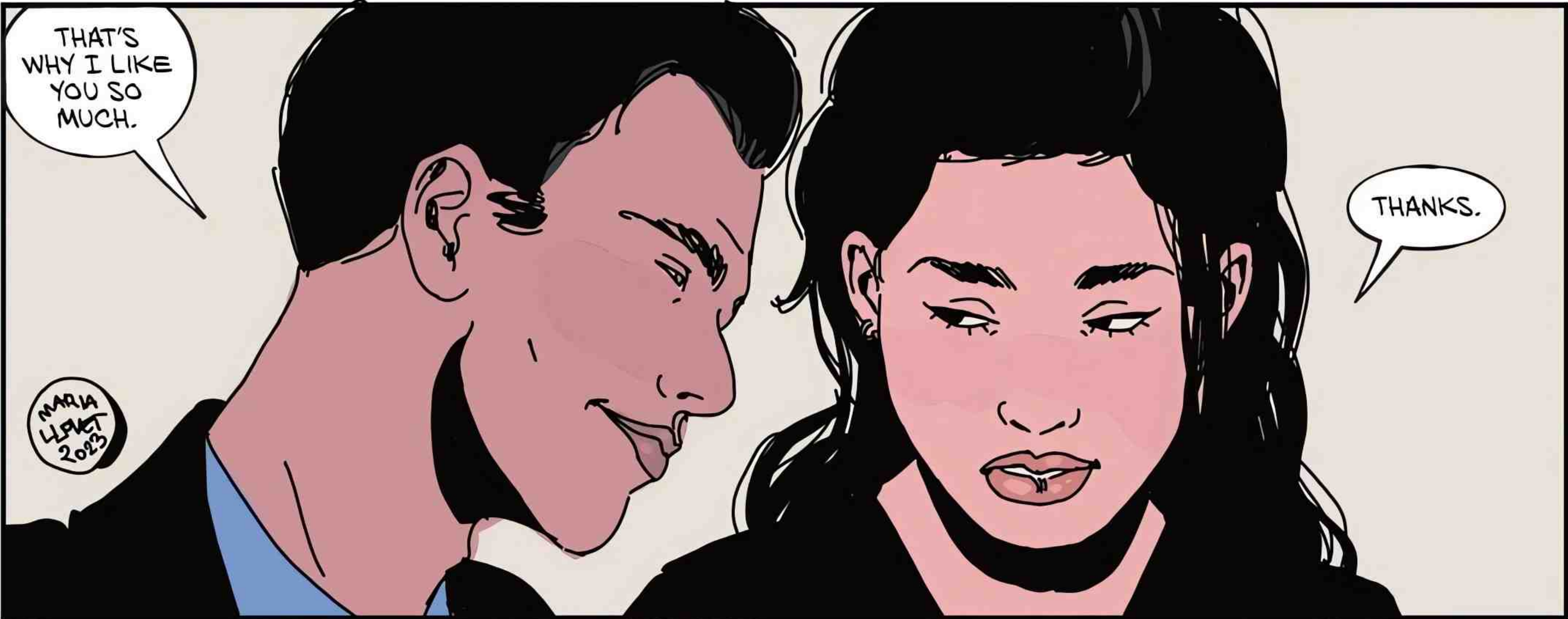
THE MASSIVELY POPULAR,
EISNER-NOMINATED
WEBTOON SERIES IS
NOW IN PRINT!

AUGUST











THE BLOOD SHONE BLACK AND SLICK ON THEIR BREASTS AS THE WOMEN DANCED.

THEY BARKED AND SCREAMED AT THE MOON IN STRANGE HARMONIES AND SMEARED THEIR CONQUEST DOWN THEIR ARMS AND ACROSS THEIR FACES. THE ELDEST OF THEM SAT AMONG THE CORPSES, RIPPING WET FLESH AND MUSCLE, PRESSING IT BETWEEN HER BONY FINGERS TO ANOINT HER MANY DAUGHTERS.

THEIR ENEMIES HAD KNOWN SECRETS THEY DID NOT KNOW. SECRETS OF DISTANT GODS AND STRANGE MAGIC THEY FEARED. THE ELDER HAD TOLD THEM THEY COULD CONSUME THE SECRETS WITH THEIR RIVALS' FLESH. AND WAS THIS NOT POWER THEY FELT RISING BETWEEN THEM, AS THEY DANCED ROUND AND ROUND THE FLAME? WAS IT NOT POWER THAT MADE THEM FEEL AS THOUGH THEY MIGHT LIFT INTO THE AIR?

THE THESSALIAN STOOD STILL IN THE SHADOWS OF THE TREE LINE AND WATCHED THE WOMEN DRENCHED IN THE BLOOD OF HER SISTERS. SHE COULD FEEL THE FIRE REFLECTED IN HER EYES, BUT SHE DID NOT FLINCH FROM ITS HARSH LIGHT. SHE WOULD REMEMBER THIS NIGHT.

SHE HAD WARNED THE OTHERS OF THE CLOSED-MINDED HILL PEOPLE AND THEIR OLD MAGIC, BUT THE FOREST HAD BEEN AN OASIS TO HER TRIBE, AND THE THESSALIAN DID, IN FACT,

KNOW MANY SECRETS OF DISTANT GODS AND THEIR STRANGE MAGIC. HER TRIBE BELIEVED SHE WOULD BE ABLE TO PROTECT THEM.

THE THESSALIAN STEPPED FROM THE EDGE OF THE FOREST. SHE WAS SLIGHT, AND HER HAIR FELL LONG AND STRAIGHT DOWN HER BACK. IN HER HAND SHE CARRIED A SLENDER BUT STURDY BRANCH. HER COLD BLACK EYES SQUINTED TO FOCUS ON THE ELDER AND SHE WAITED FOR THE HILL PEOPLE TO NOTICE HER. THEY DID. THE DANCING CAME TO A HALT, AND THE SCREAMS DIED OUT. THE ONLY MOVEMENT WAS THE FLICKERING OF THE FIRE REFLECTED IN THE SLICK BLACK BLOOD ANOINTING THE HILL WOMEN.

THE ELDER MET HER GAZE AND TOOK TO HER FEET. BUT THE THESSALIAN HAD RAISED THE BRANCH WITH BOTH HANDS. SHE LET HER MOUTH TWIST TO A WICKED SNARL AS SHE SNAPPED IT IN TWO.

ONE BY ONE, THE HILL WOMEN'S BODIES CONTORTED, BONES SNAPPING IN QUICK AWFUL SUCCESSION WITH THE SAME BRUTAL FORCE. THE SCREAMING BEGAN ANEW, BUT THERE WAS NO MELODY TO IT.

THE ELDER DIED LAST, AS THE THESSALIAN WANTED.

THE

SANDMAN ♦ U N I V E R S E

SPECIAL

THE ESSENCE

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MARIA LLOVET

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lettering

ANDWORLD DESIGN

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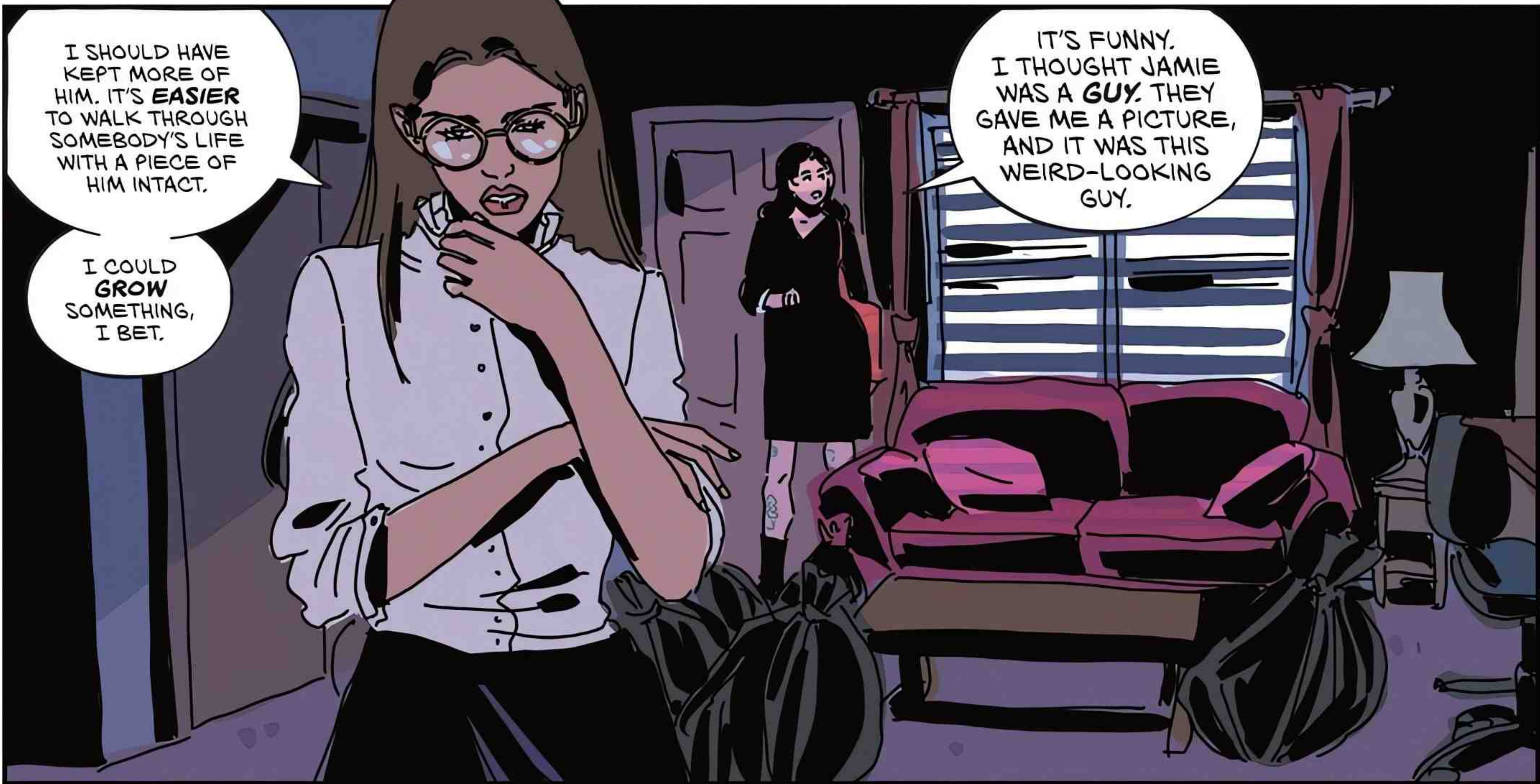
variant cover

JASMIN DARNELL

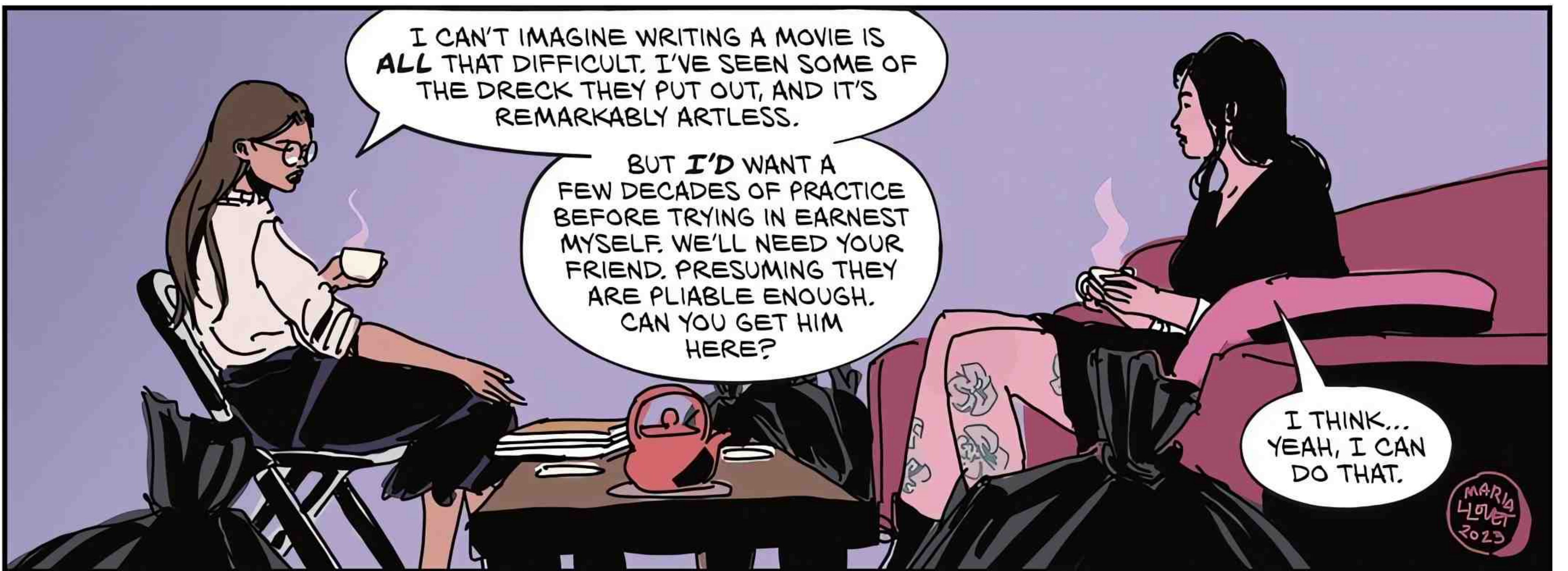
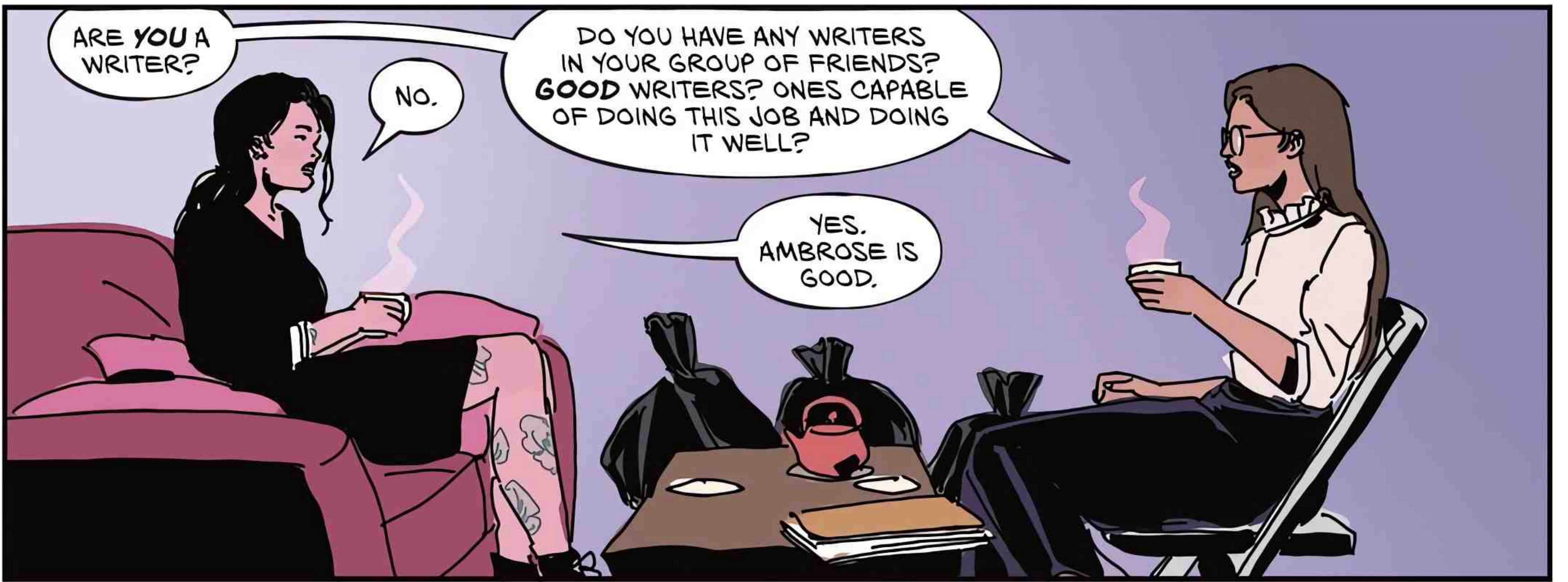
1:25 variant cover

based on characters created by
NEIL GAIMAN, SAM KIETH, *and* MIKE DRINGENBERG
THE SANDMAN UNIVERSE *curated by* NEIL GAIMAN











WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

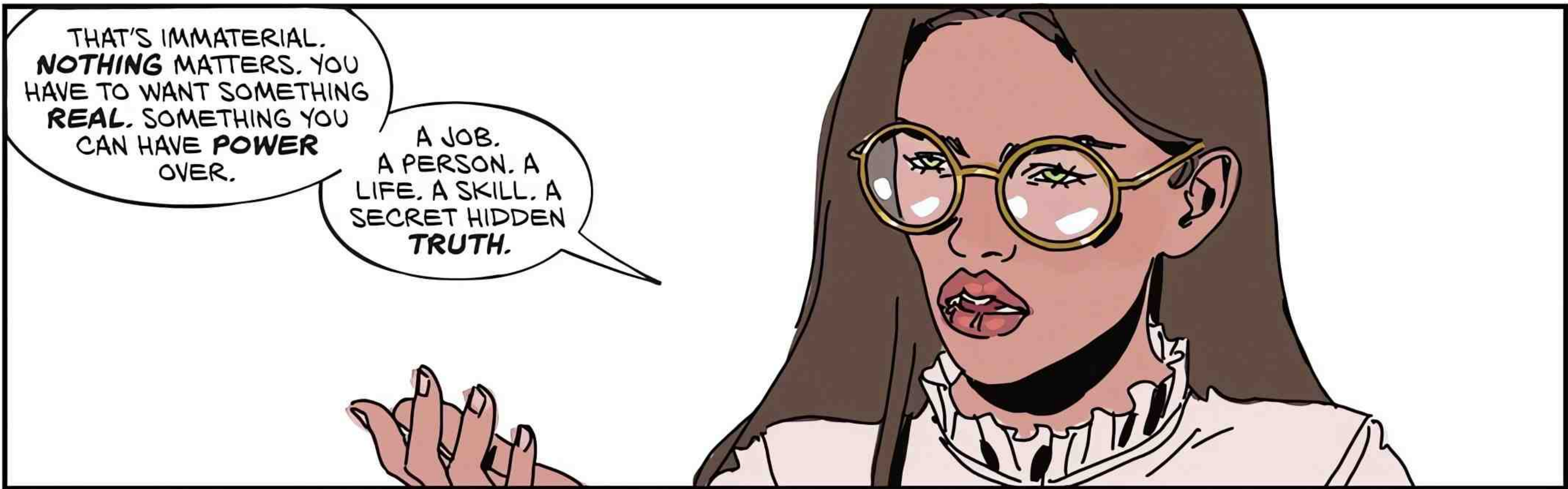


I DON'T...I
DON'T KNOW.

YOU'RE
IN A LUDICROUS
FANTASY BUSINESS.
PRESUMABLY **YOU** HAVE
A LUDICROUS FANTASY
YOU ARE TRYING TO
MAKE REAL. WHY DID
YOU COME TO THIS
CITY?

I THINK
I WANTED TO
MATTER.

MARIA
LLOVET
2013



THAT'S IMMATERIAL.
NOTHING MATTERS. YOU
HAVE TO WANT SOMETHING
REAL. SOMETHING YOU
CAN HAVE **POWER**
OVER.

A JOB.
A PERSON. A
LIFE. A SKILL. A
SECRET HIDDEN
TRUTH.



YOUR WHOLE SELF--
BODY AND **SOUL**--
NEEDS TO WANT THAT,
AND YOU EMBODY THAT
WANT SERIOUSLY ENOUGH
THAT THE **UNIVERSE**
TAKES NOTICE.

BECAUSE
YOU ARE
DEMANDING
THAT NOTICE.



I'LL **GIVE**
YOU WHAT YOU WANT
IN EXCHANGE FOR
YOUR HELP.

SO. WHAT
DO YOU WANT,
TOMMI?



nce a year or so, the Thessalian would bathe herself in the river, and walk the roads until she came upon an inn.

She had lived in these black forests since the days of Rome.

She had watched them change a hundred times over, but the inns were always a good place to steal new clothes in the contemporary style and learn enough to decide where she might go next. From time to time, she would see the others who spent their years walking between the notice of the ordinary humans with whom they shared the world. They would lock eyes in a moment of understanding and sit far from one another until it was time for one of them to leave.

As the Thessalian entered the building, a young server excitedly asked if she was here to see the witch woman, and the Thessalian supposed that she was. With a cup of ale, she studied the old woman as she worked. People had come from miles in all directions to consult with the witch in their midst. At first, the Thessalian took the witch woman as nothing more than an ordinary fortune teller. There was skill in fortune telling, but mostly they were old tricks the Thessalian knew all too well or could unravel in short order. But there is a strange quality to true magic, and she saw it at work here.

After a few long hours, the Thessalian sat across from the old witch and listened to a well-rehearsed introduction to the process. The Thessalian enjoyed the

little flourishes designed to amuse the simple-minded and distract them from real prophecy. What she liked best was a solemn oath: that if the old witch failed to see the truth, she would never be able to read the future again. And with that note, marked with true power and intent, the old witch asked the Thessalian what she wished to know. Grinning, the Thessalian asked how she was going to die. The old witch smiled as she started her little rituals, burning some herbs in a small stone bowl and breathing them in. They smelled nice, but did little more than fill the room with sweet smoke. It was only a moment before the old witch began to understand what she was sitting across from.

Fear overcame the woman. She grasped the Thessalian's hands. Apologizing. Calling her mother. Begging her not to ask this question. To release her. To ask anything else. It was beyond her power to comprehend what could end the life of someone so powerful, and too far away to see. But the Thessalian pressed. She had paid the cost, and the old witch had made her oath. She sat, patiently waiting for her answer.

Hours later, the old witch lay broken on the floor. The magic was gone from her, and the Thessalian was satisfied. She leaned forward to speak into the old witch's ear. She said that she knew how she was going to die, and had known for a thousand years.

Her death, like her life, belonged to her and her alone.





IT SMELLS HORRIBLE IN HERE.

I'M COOKING SOMETHING.

TO EAT?



PROBABLY NOT. THOUGH CONSUMING A PIECE OF HIM **WOULD** PROBABLY HAVE HELPED, IF HE HAD BEEN MORE INTERESTING.



IS **HE** GOING TO BE OKAY?

YOUR FRIEND? OF COURSE. HE'S JUST IN A **TRANCE**.

LOCKED IN ON THE WORK AT HAND. WHEN HE GETS OUT OF IT, HE'LL PROBABLY TRY TO CHASE THIS KIND OF FOCUS FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE.

CLACK CLACK CLACK



YOU DON'T LIVE HERE, DO YOU?

YOU'RE PERCEPTIVE. **GOOD**. RIGHT NOW, IT SEEMS BEST THAT I DON'T LIVE **ANYWHERE**.

I BELIEVE THEY RENT THIS PLACE OUT ON THE WEEK-ENDS, BUT I EXPECT I'LL BE GONE BY THEN.



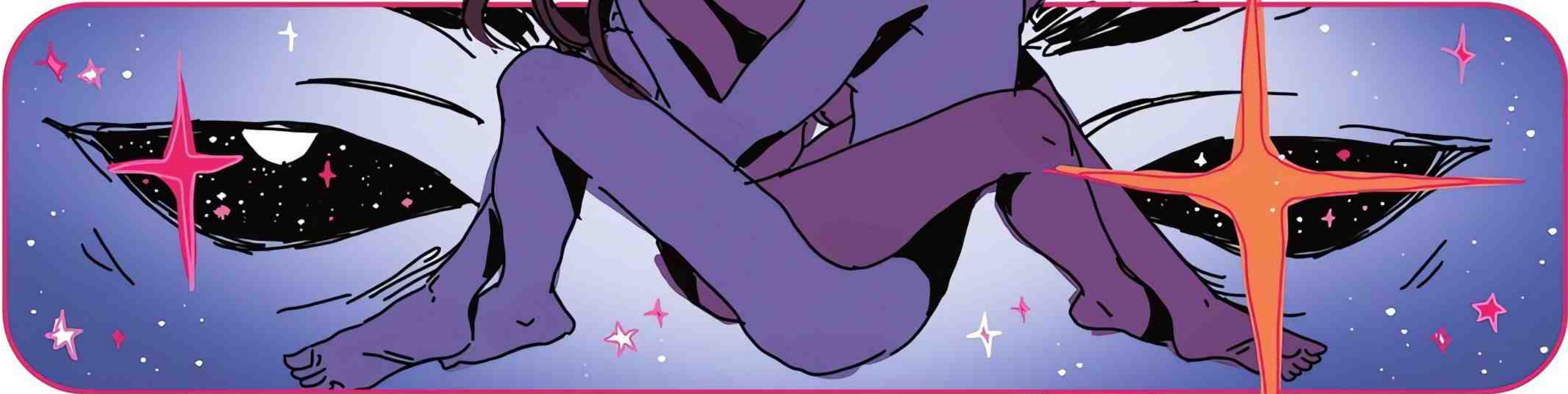
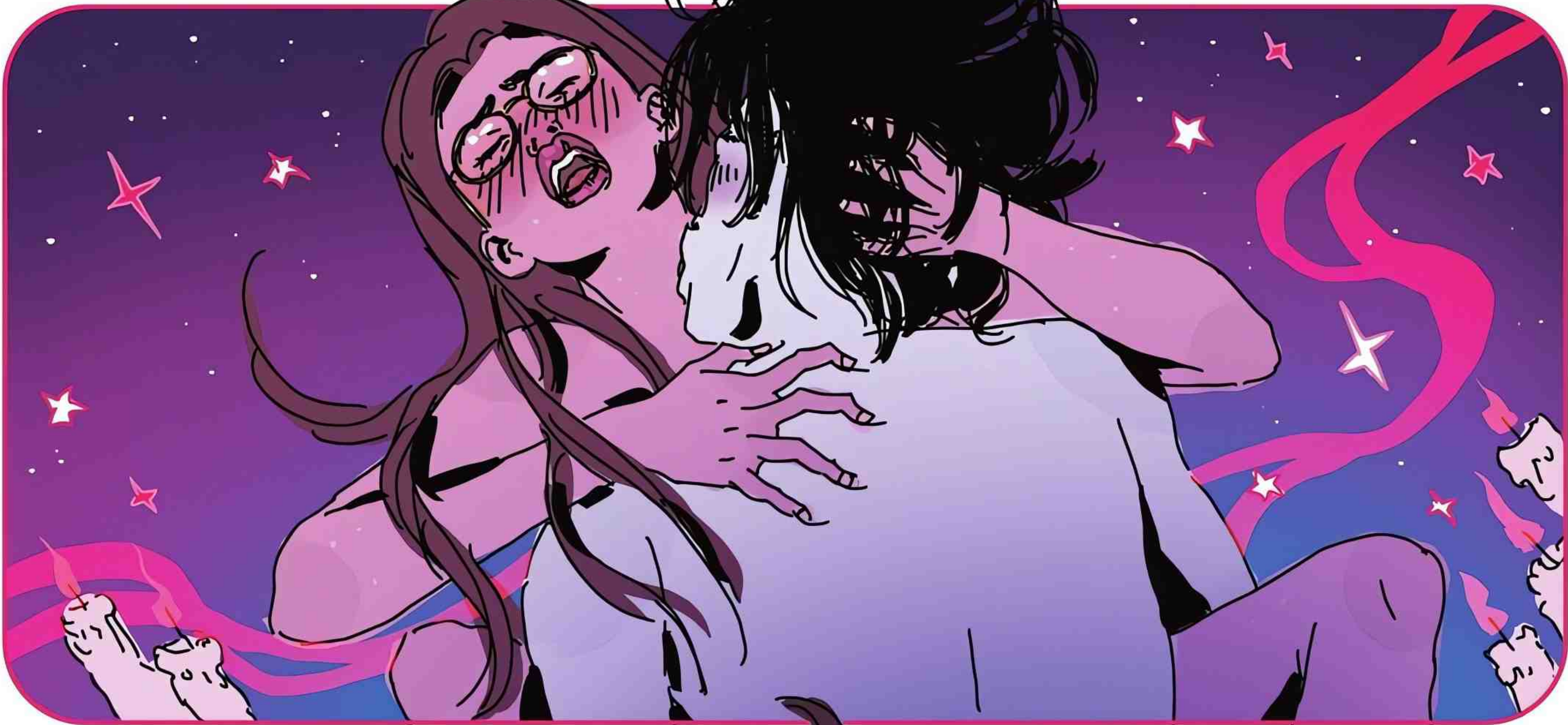
DID YOU THINK ABOUT WHAT I ASKED YOU?

WHAT?

WHAT DO YOU **WANT**, TOMMI?

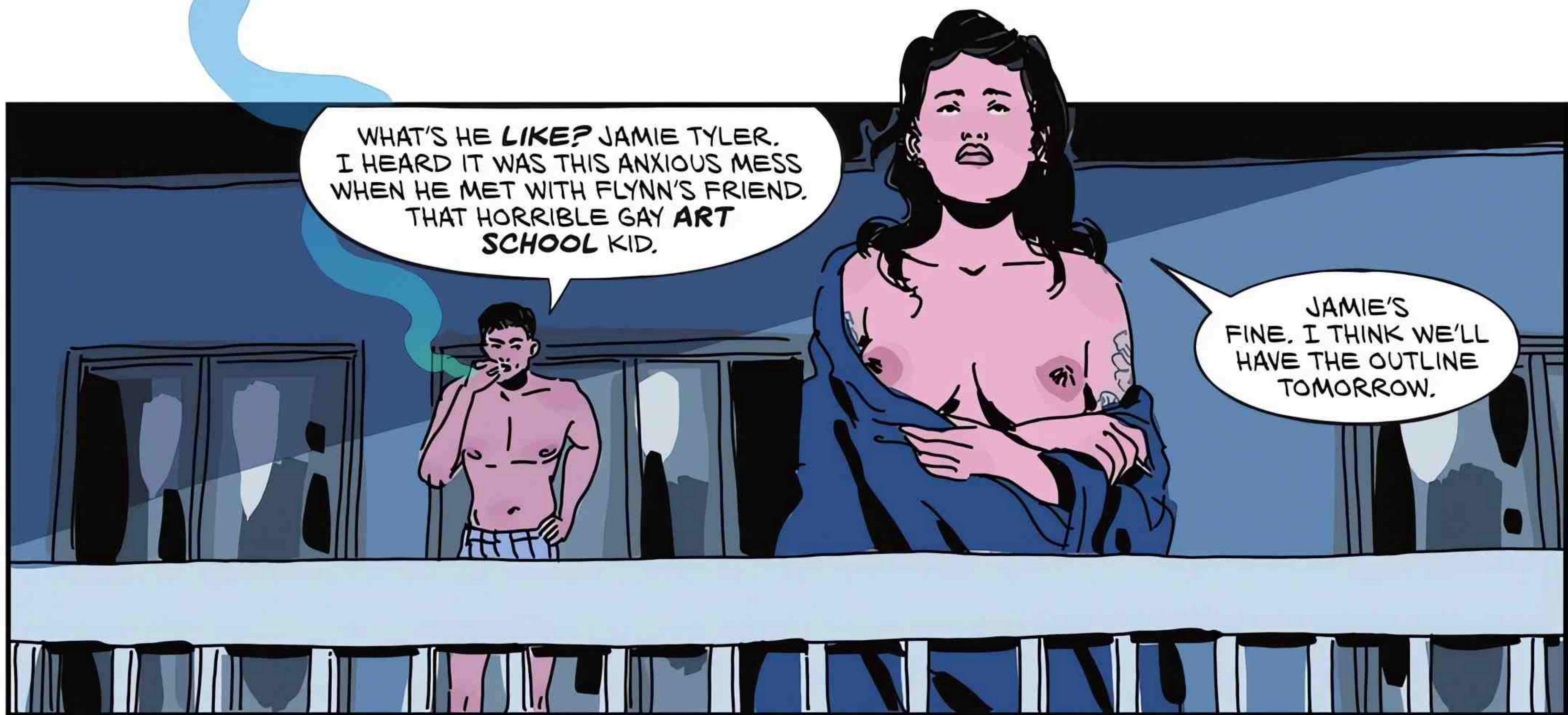
MARIA LOVET 2023











SHE WOULD LEAVE THE COLONY AT FIRST
LIGHT, HEADING TO THE SOUTH.

She had concocted the story a few weeks prior, anticipating its need. An urgent letter from Rhode Island, speaking of her mother falling ill. None would suspect, and in a few short months, no one would even remember the name she had taken for herself. Mary was such an ordinary name. That is why she had chosen it.

At first, few had paid any mind at all to the young widow who walked at night in the woods. None could recall her husband. If asked, they would tell you he died the first winter the two arrived in Massachusetts. None could recall his name. Not that it bothered any of them. The widow Mary tended to her home. She sat in church most mornings, and sang the hymns with a plain, flat voice. She was a patient observer, absorbing the petty dramas of village life but never participating in any of it herself.

It changed when the rumors started.

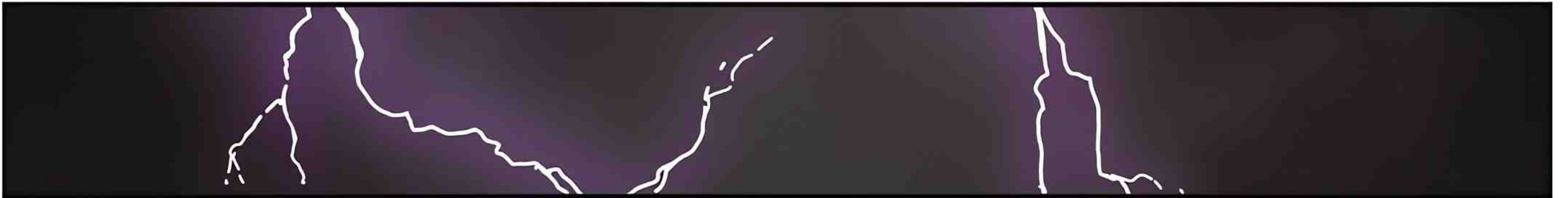
A town sixty miles to the south had found evidence of witchcraft among its young women. Three had been

burned at the stake. The widow Mary knew that fear spread quick, but stupidity spread even more quickly. She knew without asking who had started whispering questions about her walks at night. She noticed the eyes of cruel men and crueller wives turn toward her in the pews. So she began to make her move.

She had walked the streets of great ancient cities; she had dined with gods and had slain monsters. She had come to the new world to explore the frontier and the native cultures and its foreign magic. She thought the frontier life would allow her some small comforts as she learned what she sought to learn. But she was never defenseless. Her whispers carried with them a supernatural weight, twisting the minds of the frightened villagers.

The widow Mary watched as each of the good Christian women who had so quickly sought her blood with their careless talk was bound to the stakes. She watched a young man drop the torch upon the pyre. She watched the flames take each of them in turn.

Yes, the Thessalian thought. At first light she'd ride south, and no one would think of the widow Mary ever again.





HERE, I WANT YOU TO UNDERSTAND THE FULL EFFECT.

OH JESUS.



HOLY FUCK.



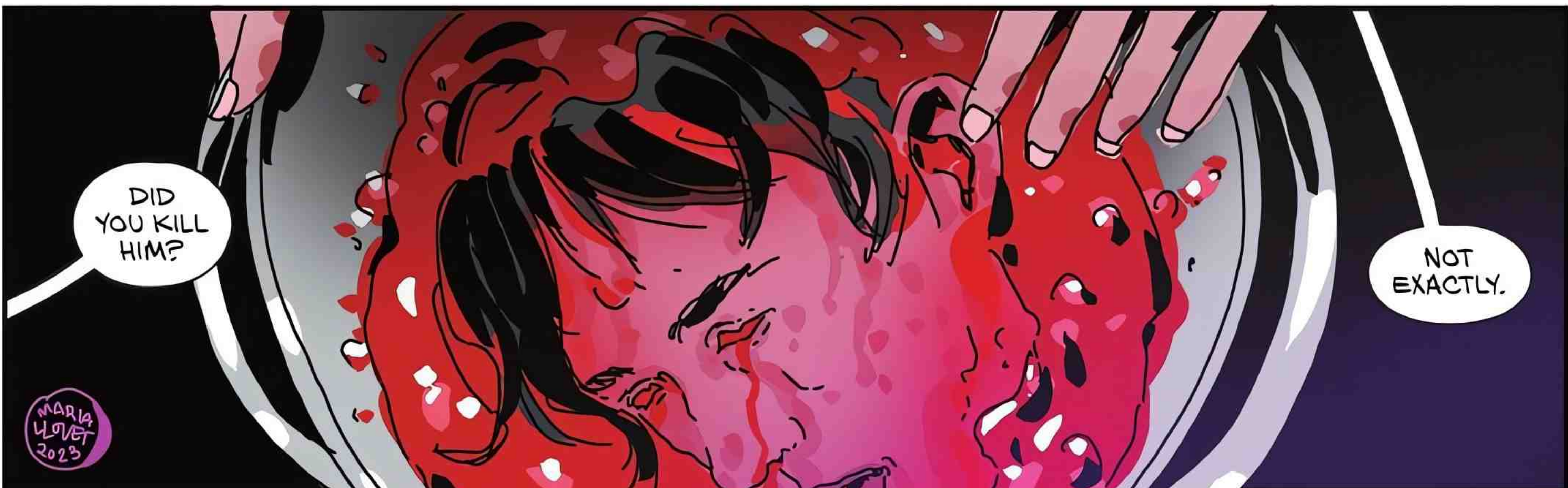
IT LOOKS STRANGE TO YOU, BUT IT WILL TAKE LESS OF A GLAMOUR TO KEEP WALKING THROUGH THIS POOR MAN'S LIFE.



YOUR NAME ISN'T **REALLY** JAMIE TYLER.

YOU'VE KNOWN THAT FOR A WHILE NOW.

I GUESS I HAVE.



DID YOU KILL HIM?

NOT EXACTLY.



I WANTED TO **KNOW** WHAT HAD HIM IN ITS THRALL, BECAUSE HE LIVED NEXT DOOR, AND I **DIDN'T** WANT THE PERSON LIVING NEXT DOOR IN THE THRALL OF SOMETHING MORE POWERFUL THAN **ME**.

I KNOW HOW TO **SURVIVE**, AND I HAVE SURVIVED FOR MANY CENTURIES **AVOIDING** LIVING NEXT DOOR TO SOMETHING DANGEROUS.

BUT IF YOU WALK CERTAIN PATHS, SOMETIMES THEY END UP WITH DANGER LIVING RIGHT NEXT DOOR. AND **WHEN** THAT HAPPENS, I **ACT**.



I TOLD **HIM** I'D LET HIM SPEAK TO THE YOUNG WOMAN'S **GHOST**, TO WRITE A BETTER STORY. BUT NOW IT'S CLEAR THE FLYNN GIRL'S SPIRIT **ISN'T** IN THE AFTERLIFE.

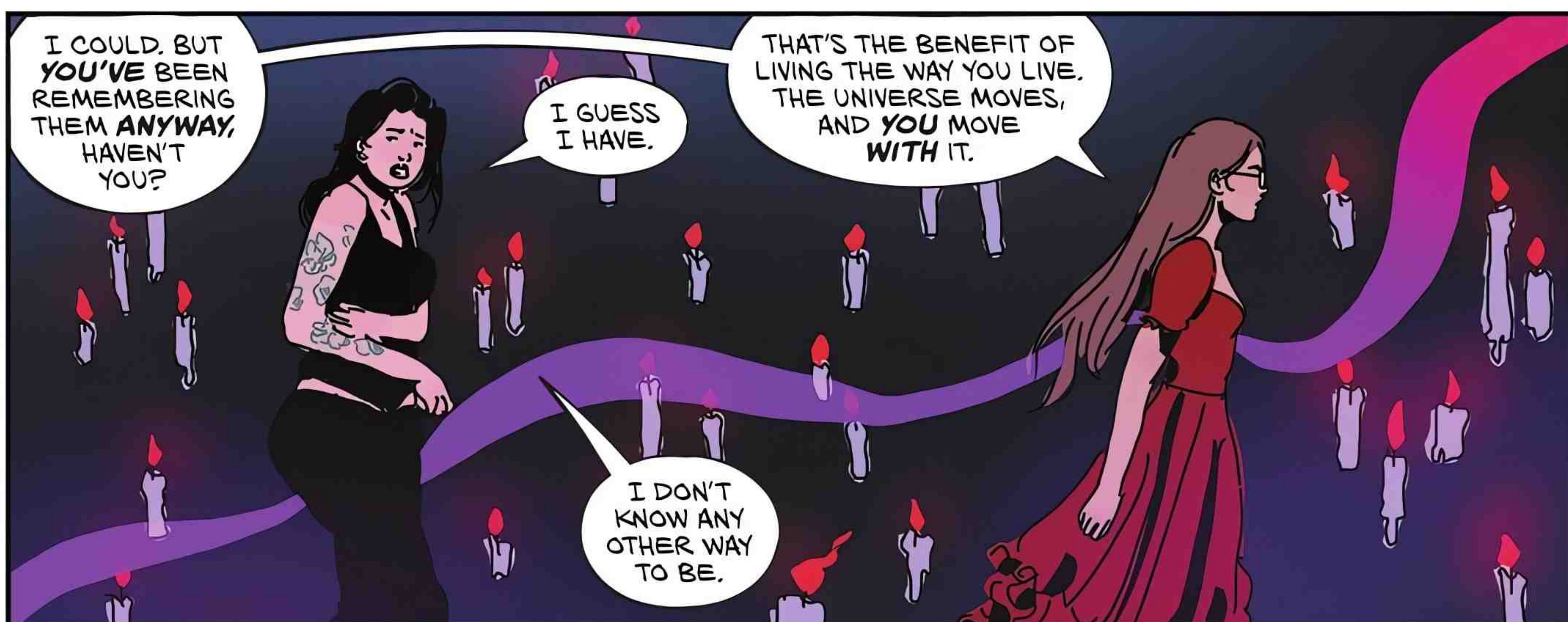
HOW CAN YOU KNOW THAT?



I **LOOKED**.



I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO GIVE ME TEA. TO LIKE...MAKE IT **EASIER** FOR ME. TO NOT **REMEMBER** THESE CONVERSATIONS.



I COULD. BUT **YOU'VE** BEEN REMEMBERING THEM **ANYWAY**, HAVEN'T YOU?

I GUESS I HAVE.

THAT'S THE BENEFIT OF LIVING THE WAY YOU LIVE. THE UNIVERSE MOVES, AND **YOU** MOVE **WITH** IT.

I DON'T KNOW ANY OTHER WAY TO BE.



YOU WILL.

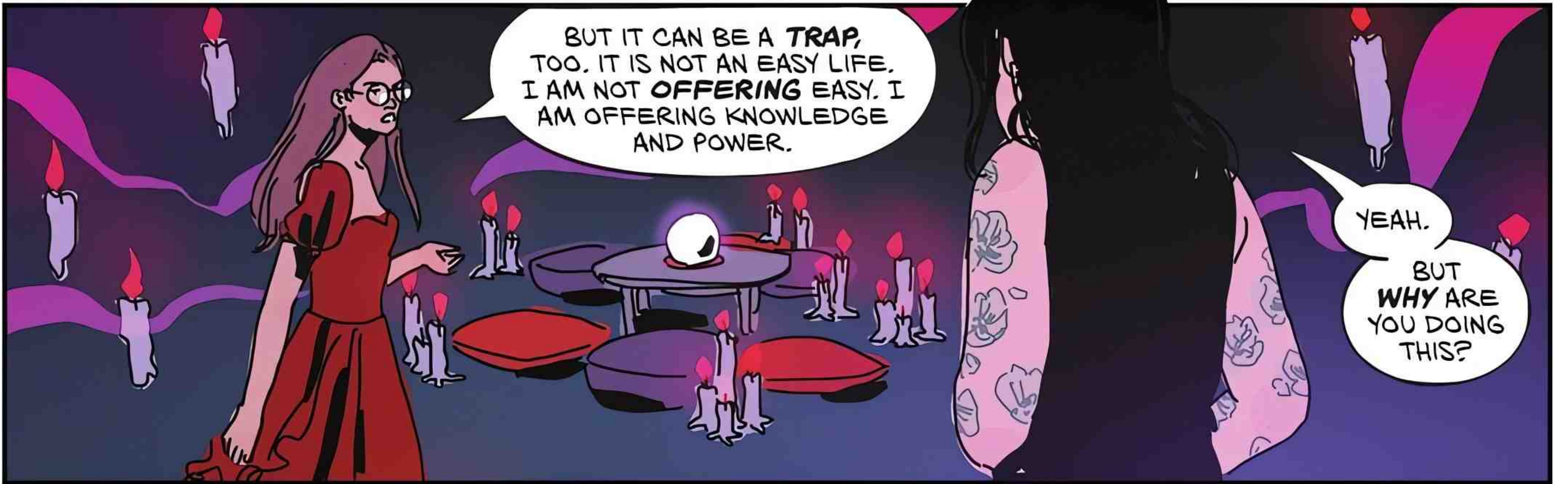
WHEN I MOVE, I MOVE THE **UNIVERSE**.



YOU THINK **THAT'S** POWER, DON'T YOU?

IT IS. IT **HAS** TO BE.

IT IS, IF YOU'RE CLEVER. AND I'M PRETTY CLEVER.



BUT IT CAN BE A **TRAP**, TOO. IT IS NOT AN EASY LIFE. I AM NOT **OFFERING** EASY. I AM OFFERING KNOWLEDGE AND POWER.

YEAH.

BUT **WHY** ARE YOU DOING THIS?



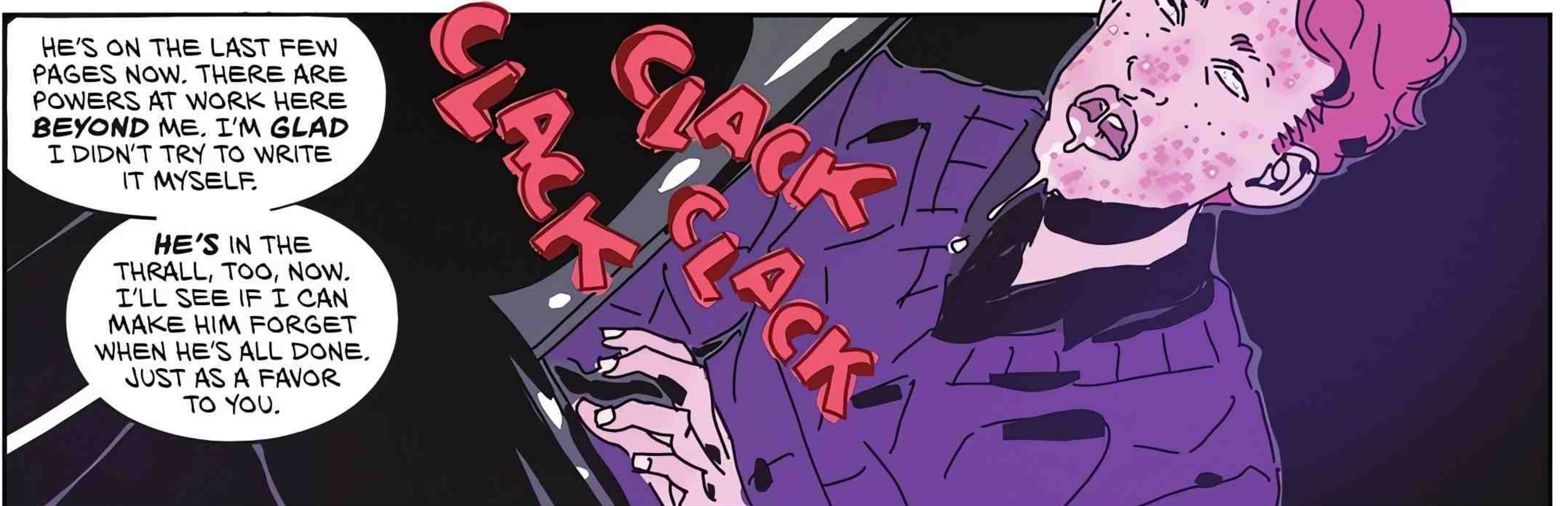
EVERYTHING COSTS **SOMETHING**. SOMETIMES EVERYTHING COSTS **EVERYTHING**.

IF YOU'RE CLEVER, YOU CAN **CHOOSE** THE COST, AND THE COST CAN WORK OUT TO YOUR BENEFIT. DOES THAT MAKE SENSE?



NO.

IS AMBROSE OKAY?



HE'S ON THE LAST FEW PAGES NOW. THERE ARE POWERS AT WORK HERE **BEYOND** ME. I'M **GLAD** I DIDN'T TRY TO WRITE IT MYSELF.

HE'S IN THE THRALL, TOO, NOW. I'LL SEE IF I CAN MAKE HIM FORGET WHEN HE'S ALL DONE. JUST AS A FAVOR TO YOU.



FADE IN:

12. MONTAGE — THE LIFE OF THE WITCH THESSALY

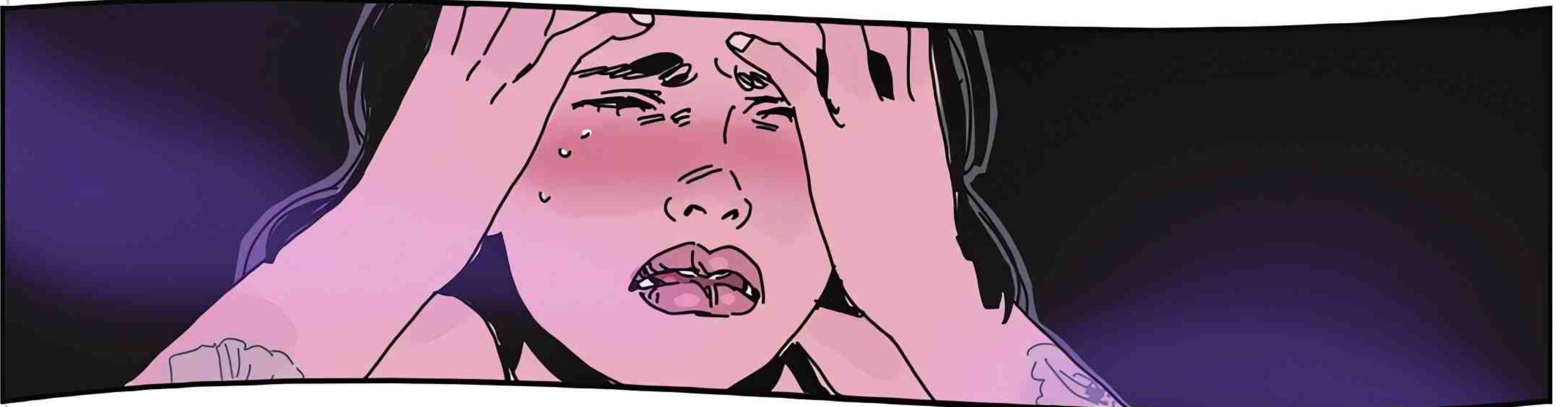
Centuries of story burn through TOMMI's mind. In the stories, she is THE WITCH herself. What does she call herself? She hears the name THESSALY echo time and time again, one small tether to an almost forgotten life. TOMMI notes the pointed quality of these stories. Stories of the old witch overcoming any threat that stood in her way. Anything standing between her and survival.

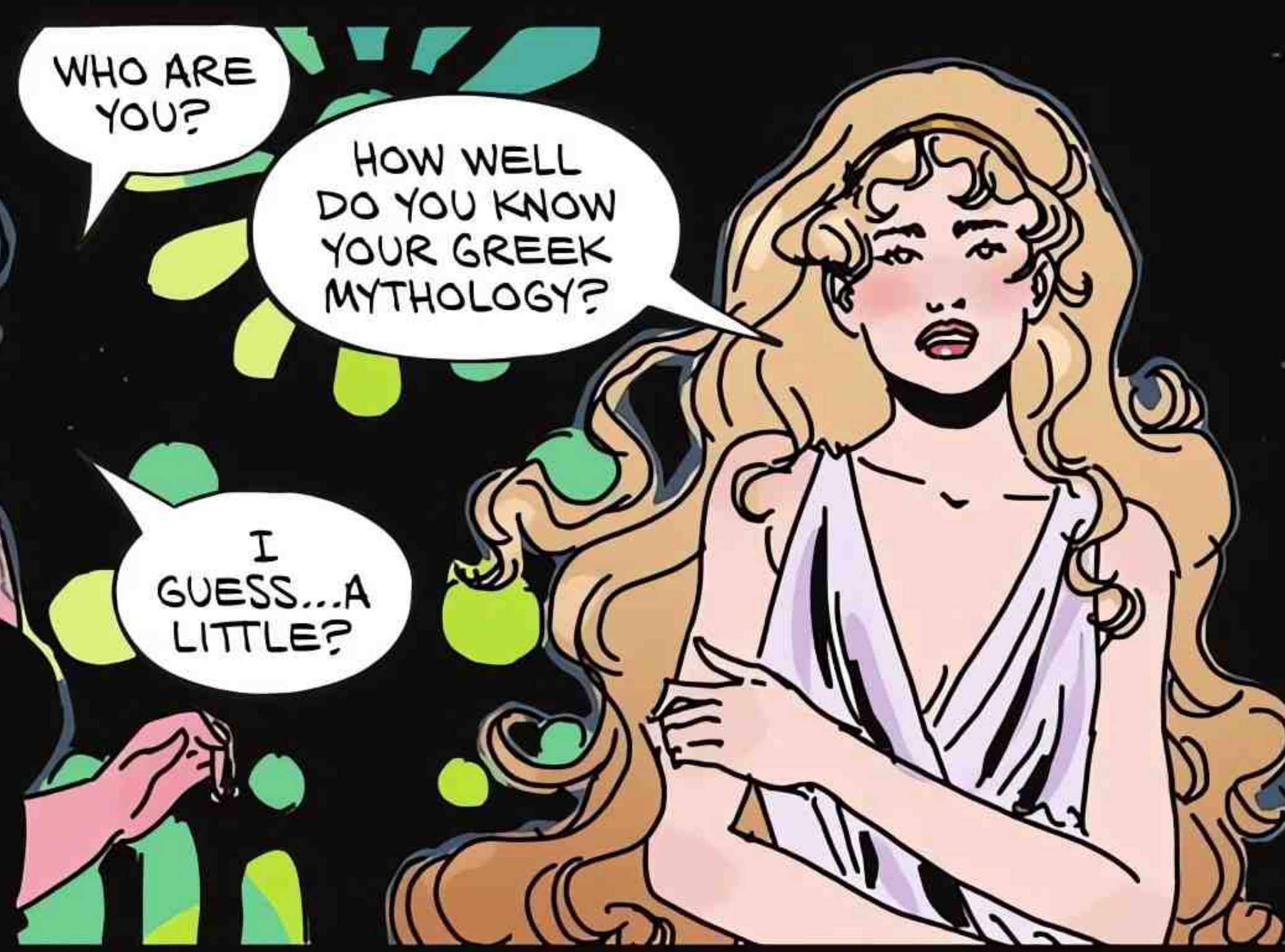
But she can scarcely think as the stories roll forward and forward through time. She wishes she could take a deep breath, but is that even her thought, or a passing thought of THE WITCH walking through London in the Victorian age? Or of her carving the face off some killer in a run-down apartment in the 1990s? All of the stories bleed together, and they hurt.

TOMMI

I...I can't—it's too much—

And as they cycle through, one by one by one, she realizes she might not survive this process. That all she wanted to learn, and take into herself, is more than she can handle. She is just a regular woman. She wants the dumb and pretty girl she loves to love her a little more than she does. She wants her job and her life to mean a little more than they do. She has never once wanted anything the way THE WITCH wanted to stay alive. To overcome anything that stood in her way. The deep intensity of that want is all-consuming, and it feels like it is ripping TOMMI'S mind apart.





HELLO?

HE CAN'T HEAR YOU.
HE'S NOT A PERSON. JUST
PART OF THE WITCH'S
MEMORY.

BUT
YOU'RE
NOT.

NO. I'M
NOT.

WHO ARE
YOU?

HOW WELL
DO YOU KNOW
YOUR GREEK
MYTHOLOGY?

I
GUESS...A
LITTLE?

MY NAME IS
CALLIOPE.

I'M A MUSE.
I HAVE SOME POWER
OVER EPIC STORIES,
AND YOU'RE BEING TOLD
A **VERY** GOOD STORY
RIGHT NOW. BUT IT
COULD USE SOME
DIRECTION. SOME
INSPIRATION.

SO I CAN
INTERCEDE A
LITTLE, **WITHOUT**
HER STOPPING ME,
AND LEAVE YOU
WITH THE STORY
YOU NEED TO
TELL.

MARIA
LOVER
2023



WHO IS HE?

HE **WAS** THE KING OF STORIES. DREAM OF THE ENDLESS.

FOR A WHILE, HE WAS THE WITCH THESSALY'S CONSORT. FOR A WHILE, HE WAS **MINE**.



HE'S BEAUTIFUL.

I SUPPOSE HE IS. BUT I KNOW HIM **QUITE** A BIT BETTER THAN YOU.



WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME. THESSALY IS A **POWERFUL** WITCH, AND SHE HAS LIVED A POWERFUL STORY. SHE IS TELLING THAT STORY TO YOU NOW. IN HER WAY.



THE **CURRENT** DREAM CANNOT ACT IN THIS CASE **DIRECTLY**. BUT HE HAS AUTHORITY IN STORIES, SO HE TOOK HIS CHANCE.



HE ASKED ME TO INTERCEDE, AND I DECIDED I WOULD.

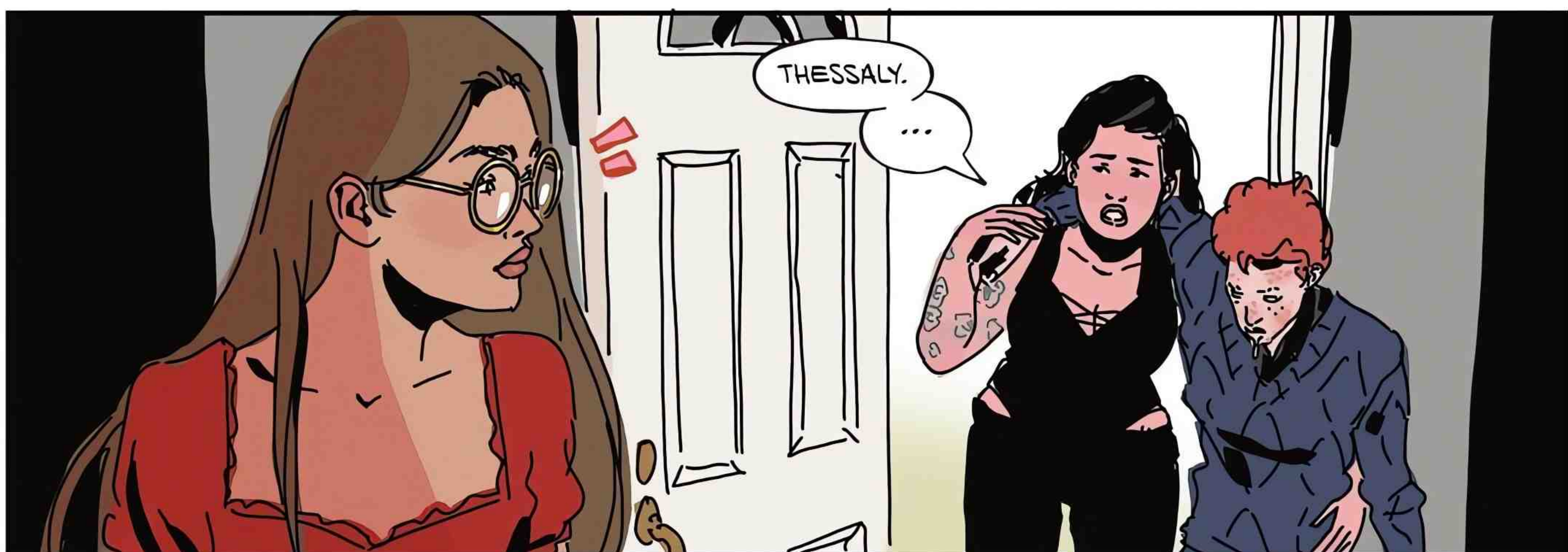
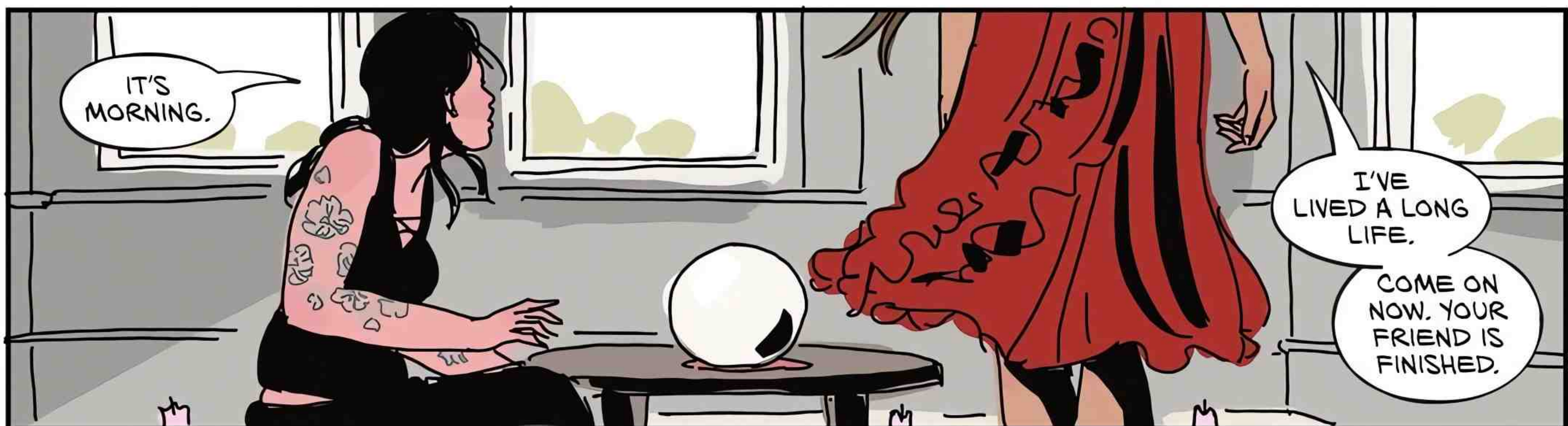
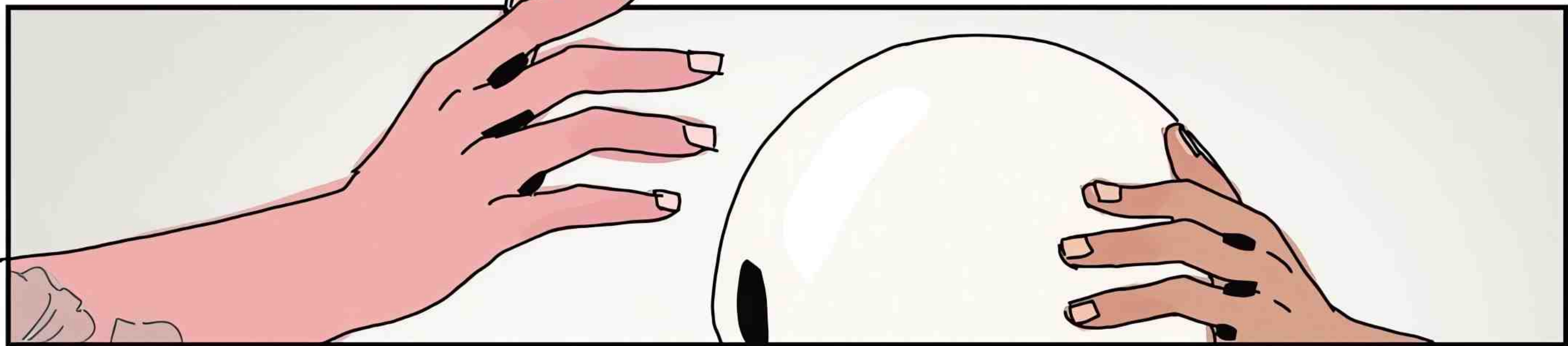
KNOWING **WHOSE** MACHINATIONS THE WITCH HAS BECOME WRAPPED UP IN...



I KNOW HOW **WANTING** SOMETHING CAN DESTROY A PERSON. SOMETIMES IT CAN DESTROY SOMETHING **MORE** THAN A PERSON.

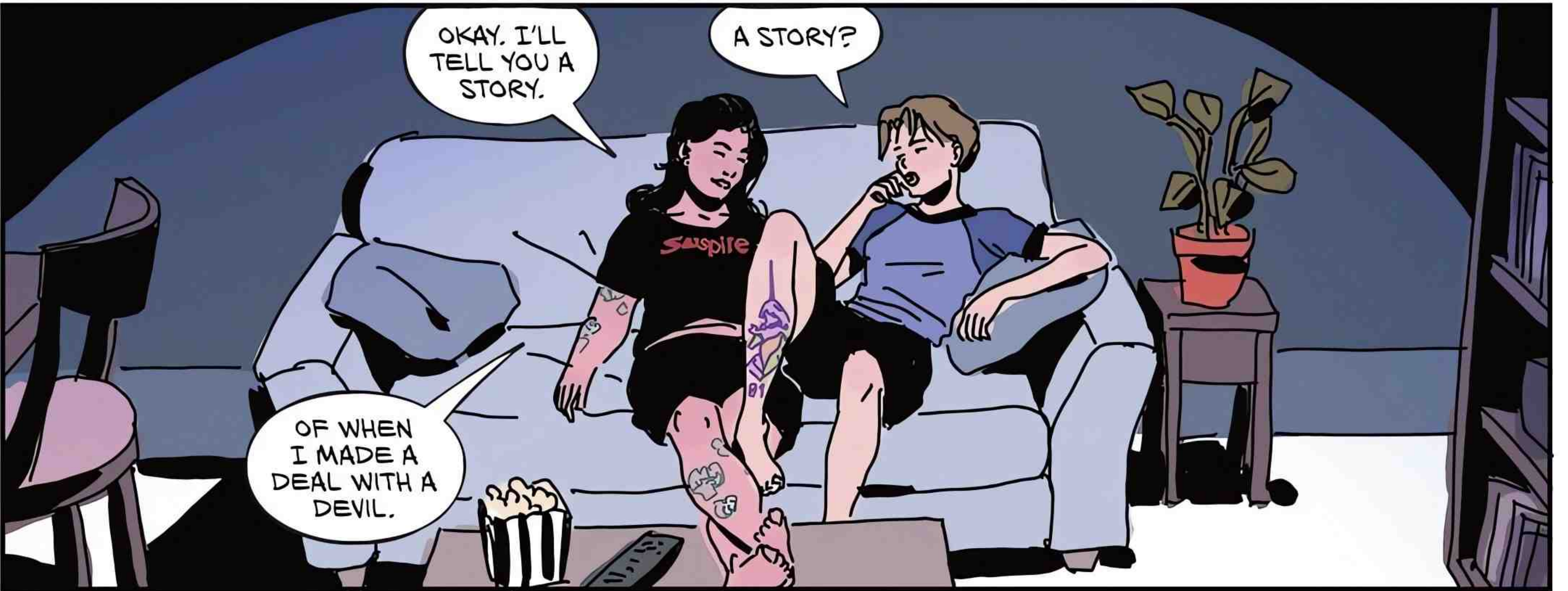
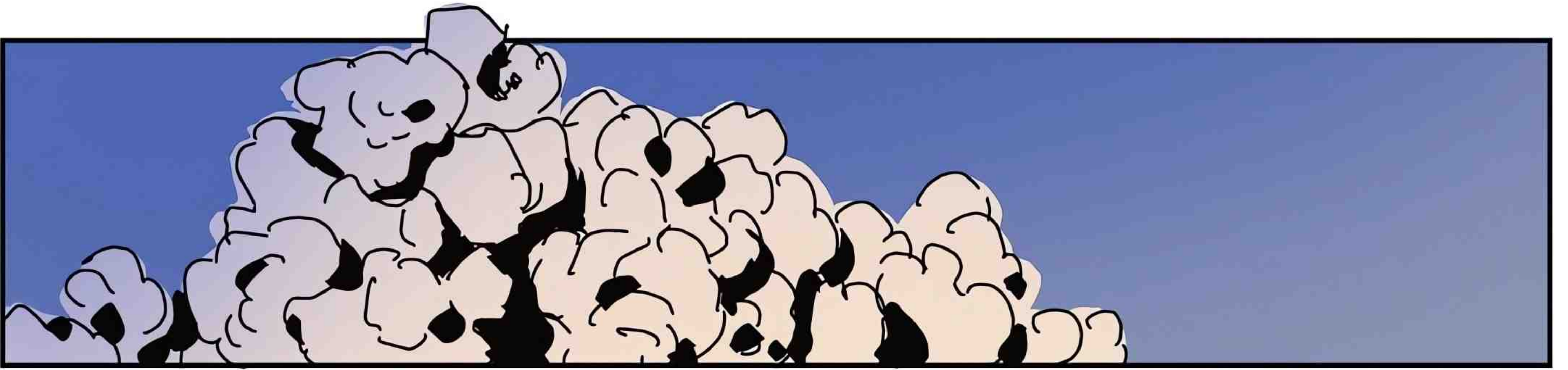
NOW LISTEN TO ME...

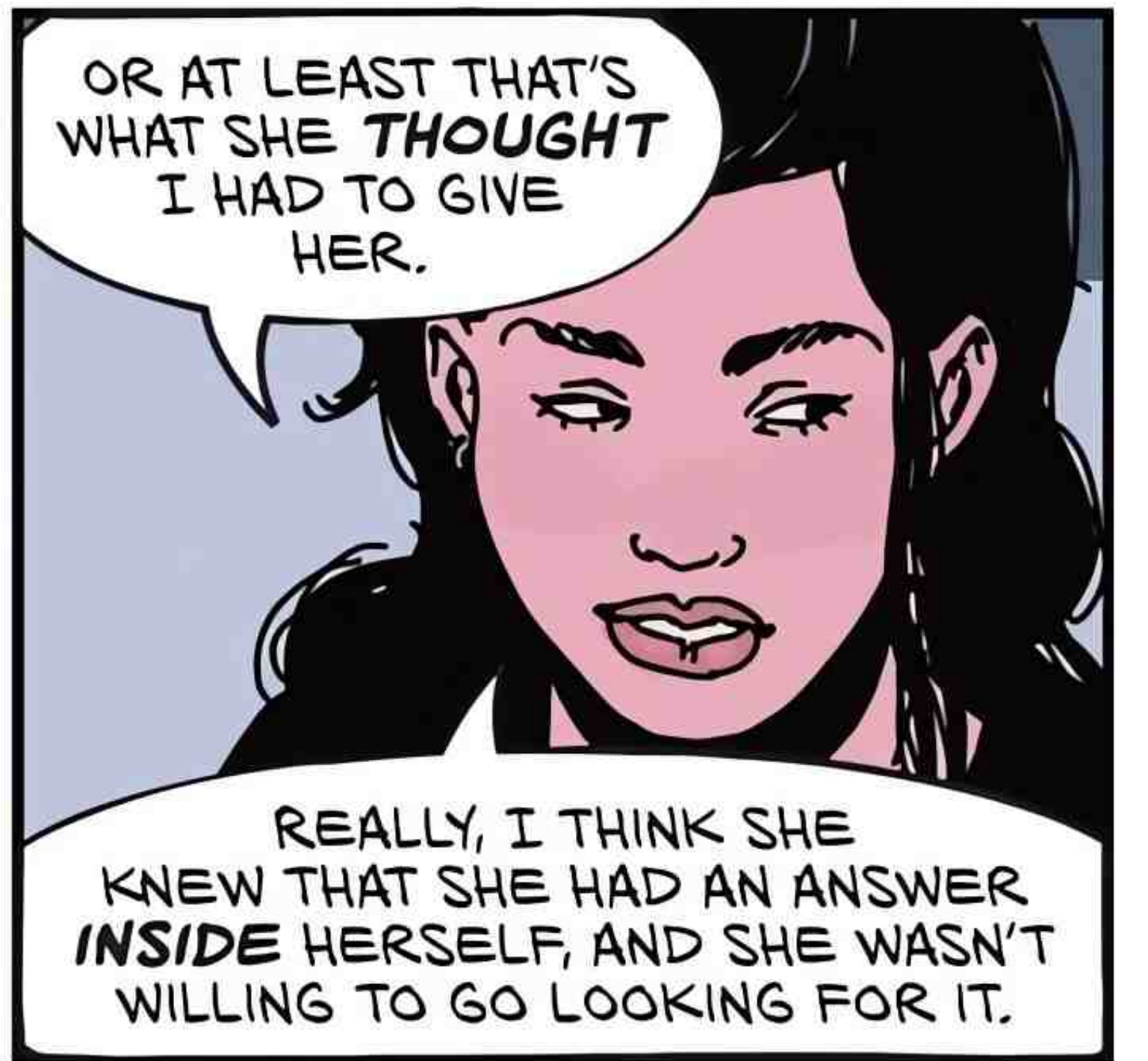
MARIA LOVET 2013









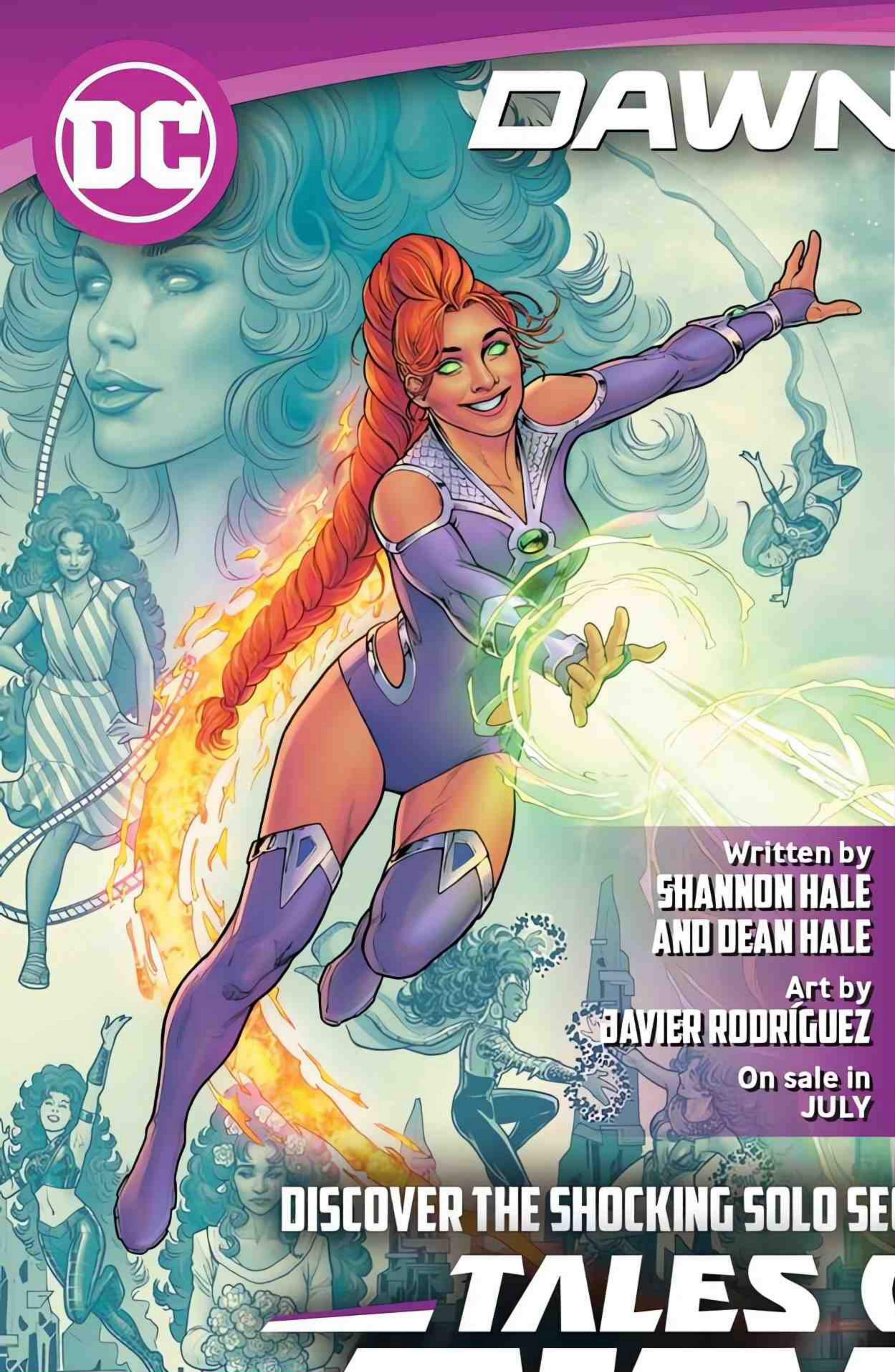


TO BE CONTINUED IN THE SANDMAN UNIVERSE:
NIGHTMARE COUNTRY--THE GLASS HOUSE #4!

TYMONIZ
+
LOVET
2023



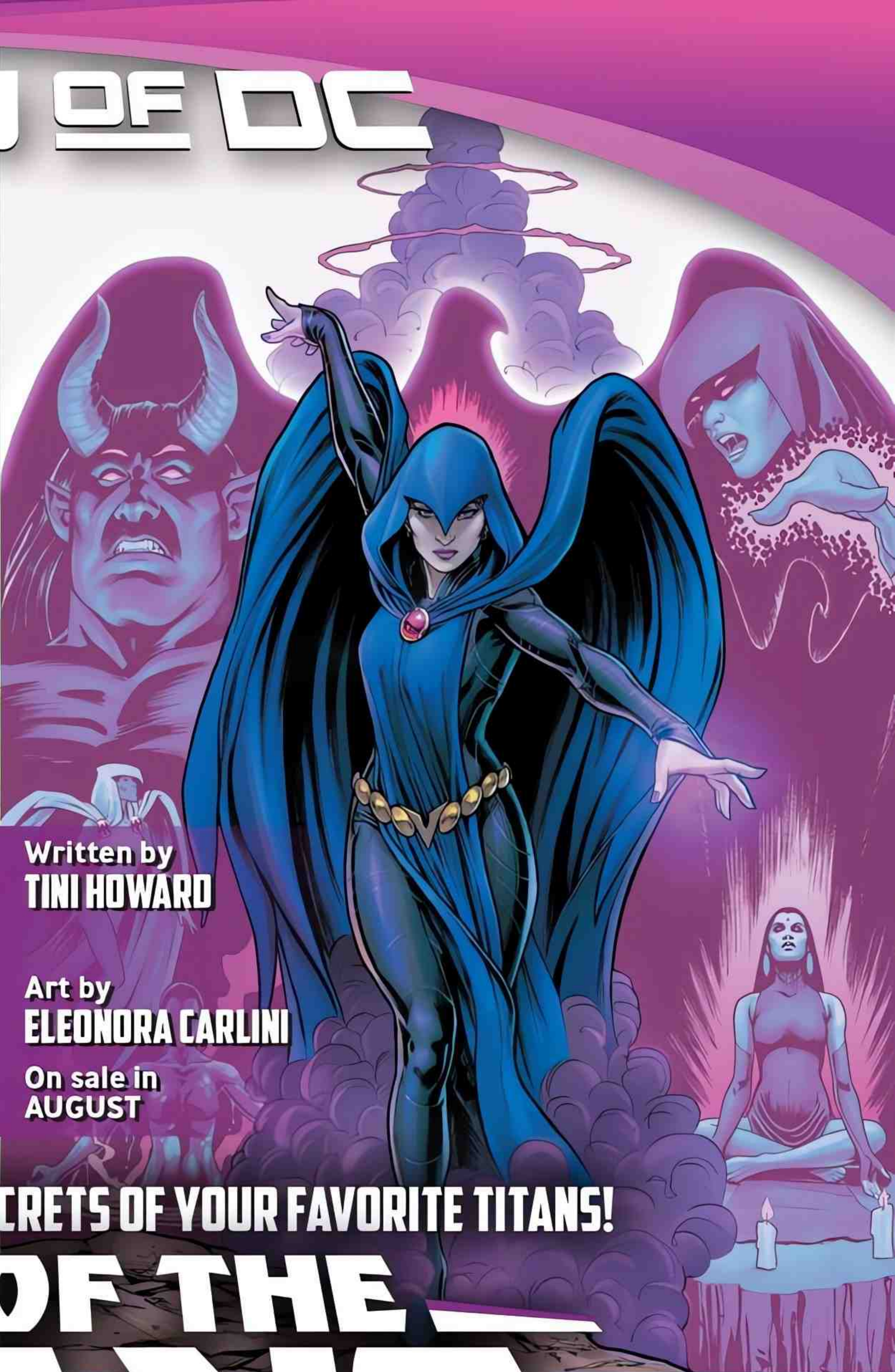
DAWN OF DC



Written by
**SHANNON HALE
AND DEAN HALE**

Art by
BAVIER RODRIGUEZ

On sale in
JULY



Written by
TINI HOWARD

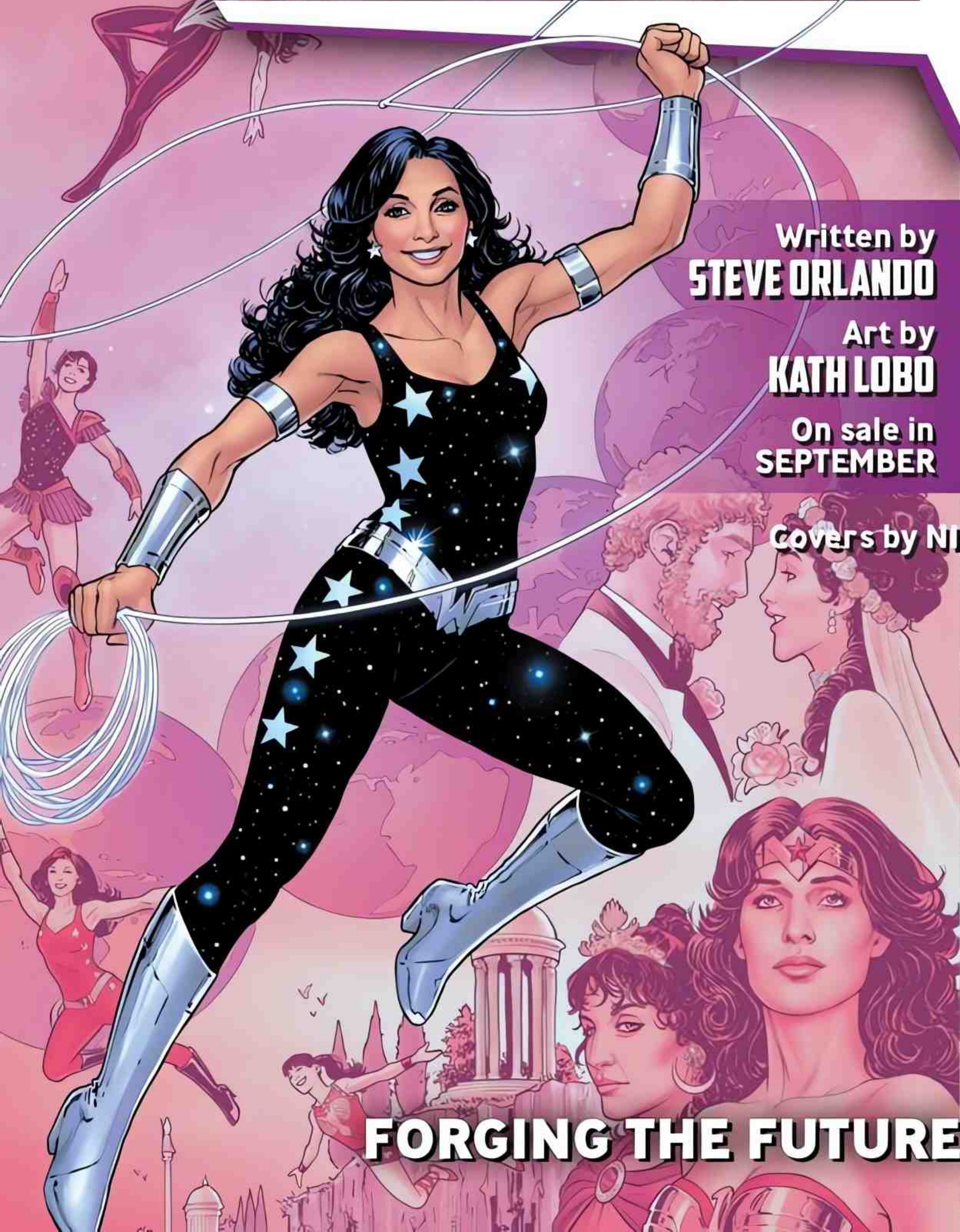
Art by
ELEONORA CARLINI

On sale in
AUGUST

DISCOVER THE SHOCKING SOLO SECRETS OF YOUR FAVORITE TITANS!

TALES OF THE TITANS

© & TM DC



Written by
STEVE ORLANDO

Art by
KATH LOBO

On sale in
SEPTEMBER

Covers by **NICOLA SCOTT**



Written by
ANDREW CONSTANT

Art by
BRANDT & STEIN

On sale in
OCTOBER

FORGING THE FUTURE ONE HERO AT A TIME

XOLO MARIDUEÑA

JAIME REYES IN

Blue Beetle



What can you share about the origin story of Jaime Reyes—and his alter ego, Blue Beetle?

Jaime is someone who's coming back to his hometown from college. One day he comes across this scarab that grants him powers beyond belief. At first, he's reluctant to become a hero, but ultimately he'll decide to accept his fate—whether he feels worthy or not!

Like most comic book films, there are tons of origin stories to pull from. I think our movie amalgamates some of Jaime's best stories in comics over the years.

How does this scarab give Jaime his powers?

The scarab, Khaji Da, is a sentient alien life-form on a mission across the universe to detect technological advancements. The scarab just so happens to attach itself to Jaime and he's granted incredible powers.

The powers are more a question of what *can't* he do? He can fly, punch things super hard, make his hands turn into different weapons. He's kind of just the best superhero out there...if I do say so myself.

Who is the villain of the movie, Victoria Kord?

Victoria Kord is played by Susan Sarandon in the film. Victoria is truly a billionaire mogul with her eyes on the prize. However, she has a bit of a chip on her shoulder because there was a disagreement on who should head up Kord Industries. Susan Sarandon is such an amazing actress and as much as Victoria Kord has a bad side, she's also very charming.

What makes this superhero film unique?

This film really is gonna tap into that familiar family feeling that is irreplaceable. You're gonna meet Jaime's family and say, maybe I don't look like them, maybe I don't sound like them, maybe our parents don't come from the same place, but I know this type of love and what this relationship feels like. I hope it will make a lot of people realize you don't have to do everything alone.

All the moments that led up to Jaime encountering the scarab were because of the foundation that his family was able to build on.

DC
Blue Beetle

IN THEATERS AUGUST 18!

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